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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: PUBLIC OUTREACH CAMPAIGN ON AHTISAARI
SETTLEMENT TARGETS KOSOVO SERBS

REF: PRISTINA 27 AND PREVIOUS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In its work to garner public support for the final status package in advance of the expected February 2 visit of UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari, the Public Outreach Working Group, composed of OSCE, USOP/USAID, UNMIK, ICO, the Kosovo government and governing and opposition political parties, has made it a priority to include Kosovo Serb input.

Through the participation of Kosovo Serbs in the group and through focus groups conducted by USAID, we have determined that security is the number one issue for Kosovo Serbs and that messages which focus on the future resonate best. This first phase in the outreach strategy -- which includes PSAs and a billboard campaign specifically targeting Kosovo Serb communities -- will be followed by an effort to explain in detail the contents of the final status package. Part of this strategy is the use of OSCE town hall meetings in Serb enclaves throughout Kosovo. USOP will look for appropriate opportunities to reinforce this effort and to support the overriding goal of keeping Serbs in Kosovo. END SUMMARY.

Serb Participation in Content Generation -- Stress on Security

2. (SBU) The Public Outreach Working Group, chaired by OSCE Amb. Wnendt and made up of key internationals, Kosovo government figures and governing and opposition parties, has made it a priority to include Kosovo Serb input in its effort to garner support for the final status package. Kosovo Serb Petar Miletic, Secretary General of the Independent Liberal Party (SLS), actively participates in both the larger group and a sub-group developing messages. On January 18 in a private meeting before the group met, we emphasized to Miletic the importance of Serb participation in the group and the value of his and other Kosovo Serb input into message and strategy. Miletic responded that the most important issue for Kosovo Serbs was security -- a sense borne out by focus group testing of Kosovo Serbs conducted by our USAID contractor, Academy for Educational Development (AED). He also highlighted the need to separate Kosovo Serb messaging into three categories: messages for small enclaves, messages

for large enclaves, and messages for the three Serb-majority municipalities in the north. He suggested coupling the expected billboard and PSA campaign with visits by KFOR representatives to reinforce the importance of security for Kosovo's Serbs. Miletic told us he is enthusiastic about helping this effort and that his aim and ours is the same: to reassure Serbs to stay in Kosovo.

Serb Input in Testing

13. (SBU) As part of the first phase of the outreach campaign -- in advance of the expected February 2 visit of UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari -- AED, which has contracted with a local PR firm, is currently testing messages in both Albanian and Serb communities. In Serb areas, messages that focus on future ("Building Our Future Together") resonate better than those which sound triumphalist or fail to reflect realities on the ground. Indeed, Serb participants have commented that messages must recognise that many Serbs still do not feel safe in Kosovo and that certain conditions need to be met before all Kosovars can live together.

Longer-term Serb Outreach

14. (SBU) At the January 18 working group meeting, Amb. Wnendt rightly reiterated the point that messages targeting Albanians must not alienate Serb or other minority populations. He explained the importance of the second phase of the campaign in reaching out to Serbs, saying Kosovo Serbs, more so than Kosovo Albanians, need detailed information about what status will mean for specific aspects of their daily lives and for their safety. This informational phase of outreach will be done via fact sheets, fliers, town hall meetings and perhaps even hotlines. To

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support this approach, the OSCE plans to hold town hall meetings in February, after the expected delivery of the final status package, in the Serb communities of Strpce, Ranilug, Caglavica and Velika Hoca, as well as in a number of Albanian municipalities. Topics will include security, community sustainability, competencies of new municipalities and their responsibilities toward Albanians. All of these events will be recorded and excerpts will be broadcast on local radio and TV.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: Kosovo Serb buy-in to this outreach effort is key and we will continue to press for their participation and will look for ways to reinforce the OSCE/Public Outreach Working Group effort to explain the benefits of the final status package. Any substantive input regarding the provisions of the settlement that the Department or UNOSEK can provide to add content to these messages would be welcome. END COMMENT.

16. (SBU) USOP clears this cable in its entirety for release to UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari.
KAIDANOW